

Dear Chairman Powell:

I am concerned about the FCC vote to weaken media ownership rules. A similar decision in 1996 to deregulate radio station ownership resulted in a consolidation of stations, rather than the expansion of ownership that was implied in debate.

While consolidation benefits media owners through efficiencies of scale, it prevents local voices from being heard. I simply do not agree that the internet provides enough of a balance to justify further television station consolidation. The internet has changed much about our world, but it has not undermined the tremendous market power granted by federal license to use scarce broadcast spectrum.

As stated by Free Press, "In ten years of the commercialized Internet, despite hundreds of millions of dollars in investment, not a single original commercially viable media content site has been launched. Not one. More important, the value of radio and TV stations continues to grow at a much faster rate than the rate of inflation." This implies that benefits of competition have not been realized.

Please grant an official public hearing in New York where these issues may be addressed. Another one in my home state of Rhode Island would be beneficial as well -- a state where a single newspaper dominates the market; a paper which was recently purchased by Texas-based Belo, the 9th-largest media company in the nation.

Democracy requires a diverse, independent, competitive media. Please help ensure this by granting official public hearings in these states.

Sincerely,

Lillian Picchione